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HISTORY OF THE NEIREITER FAMILY



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In a small village in Germany was born the subject of this sketch. All the farmers lived in small villages, going to their small farms in the morning and returning to the small towns in the evening. In those days Germany had a compulsory military training for every boy, and at the age of fourteen years, George Neireiter was compelled to go into a military school. This German family consisted of a father and mother and of at least one son, George. We know nothing of other members of this family. George, the paternal grandfather, was born near Bingen on the Rhine in the year 1789. In the neighboring country of France, Napoleon was dictator. He had captured all Northern Italy, Southern Germany and all of Spain, and, in conquering all these surrounding principalities he made the young men go to his war and fight for him. Thus, George Neireiter of Herrin, Germany, aged 16 or 17, was fighting the Spaniards in Spain for a French General.

Napoleon returned to Paris, his army going with him. Then he conceived the idea of conquering Russia. This was one of the greatest expeditions ever planned on account of its hardships. In order to get to Russia, the Alps had to be crossed and the pass of St. Bernard scaled. At this time George Neireiter was 19 years of age and accompanied Napoleon to Moscow.

We feel that George Neireiter had as many hardships as any of the warriors because he was one of Napoleon's body guards; being called a nine pick staffsman, one of the forty chosen men as Napoleon's private body-guard. These were chosen on account of their stature and health; all being over six feet tall and weight of at least 200 pounds. They made a handsome company on their black horses, tall staffs, gold braid, showing their rank, and the banners flying in the air. They were the talk of that time of all Europe. Imagine this boy, fine looking with blond hair, blue eyes, tall, heavy and handsome, returning to Germany after the memorable march to Moscow. Imagine the pride of the parents and of a girl named Elizabeth, the German girl whom

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he took as his wife. We do not know the year that they were married, but there was born to them five sons and one daughter as follows: Casper, John, Henry, Hartman, Johan and Catherine.

They engaged in farming on the banks of the Rhine river. Wars and unsettled conditions were in every country around them. Imagine this mother not wanting her sons to go to war after the father had been compelled to do so. In America, John Adams was President, Washington had died, but had secured liberty for the United States, and these stories of prosperity and happiness drifted back to Germany to these worried people, and when Casper was about to enter the German army they decided to immigrate to the United States. They embarked in a sail vessel and were three months on the ocean, the wind drifting them back in one stormy night as far as they had gone in one month.

They landed in New York, later coming to Ohio in about the year 1826. They settled near Erie and then decided to move to Indiana where friends lived and where the Ulrey and Gresley families had already immigrated. Casper, the oldest of the family, worked his way to Fort Wayne, driving a canal boat team from Lake Erie here. They settled and entered a piece of land immediately north of the Nine Mile House, now known as the August Schroeder farm. They cleared the land and lived regular pioneers. George Neireiter died in 1862 and his wife, Elizabeth, in 1876. They are buried in the old German cemetery near Soest. They were members of that church known as the Ohio Synod Lutheran Congregation.

Casper, my grandfather, married Hanna Ulrey, and to them were born seven children; George, Daniel, Henry, Mary, Hattie, Solomon and Hannah, all of which have gone to their heavenly home with the exception of Mrs. Hattie Fry.

John married twice Ellen Ferguson and to them was born two children; Charles and Rose, now Mrs. Walter Clark, Andrew Neireiter and Janet M. Gresley.

Henry married and had a family; Mrs. Katie Thompson, Mrs. Julia Adair, Mr. Louis Neireiter, Mrs. Mary Hoff, Henry Neireiter and George Neireiter. Catherine married John Hake and her children are George Hake, Henry Hake, Jacob Hake, Mrs. Gertrude Friestrofer, Mrs. Kate Beckman, and Mrs. Christian Kleber.

Of John Neireiter and Hartman Neireiter we know nothing only that they both married here and moved to the southern part of Illinois, there raising their families. Both now are dead.

George Neireiter died January 12, 1860, aged 71 years. Elizabeth Neireiter died October 10, 1876, aged 78 years.

There are several families of Neireiters living in and near Allen County, but all of them came from Hessen Cassel, Germany, not far from Frankfort on the Rhine. Conrad Neireiter was the head of one family. Charles Neireiter, in the clothing business here, is a son. The exact relationship is not known.

The last battle in which the elder Neireiter fought for Napoleon was at Waterloo. He then became a body-guard for Blucher and helped to escort Napoleon on board ship bound for St. Helena. He said Napoleon's face looked like stone.

George Neireiter's determination to come to America materialized when the war with Russia was imminent. His intimate relations with the German High Command informed him of this fact, in which he was to have his share for the glory of the Emperor.

Upon coming to Fort Wayne, they lived there for one year before entering the land above mentioned. Later he bought 160 acres east of the Nine Mile House, where he lived until he died.

His sons, John and Jonathan, were bound out to learn trades; John to Hartman Smith of Wells County, and Jonathan to a home in or close to Middletown. When John reached his majority he was given his freedom and 40 acres of the farm, now owned by Andrew J. Neireiter.

The Harbers and Sorgs came over on the same ship with the Neireiters.

A story is told of John Neireiter as follows: When the cyclone blew the wooden bridge into the River at Williamsport, he, with Christ Meyers, volunteered to cut the bridge as it was rapidly collecting driftwood. During the work Meyers dropped his axe, then Neireiter cut the bridge and swung down on the bank to safety. Meyers valued his axe so highly, he offered a reward of \$5.00 for its recovery. Neireiter got it out of the water and did not take the money as they were close friends. Neireiter could work above rushing water without fear of being affected by it.

John Neireiter's trade was a carpenter and hewer of wood. He hewed the timbers for scores of houses and barns in Adams, Wells and Allen Counties. He could make an axe sink farther in wood than any other man with whom he worked. He had a knack of putting every ounce of strength in his body on the edge of an axe. He worked eight years contracting clearing of land by the acre. He received 50 cents per day. This price held long after the civil war. He was married twice; first, to Caroline Rapp and then to Ellen Ferguson.

Casper and Henry Neireiter, Sr. are buried at Antioch Cemetery. Henry Neireiter, Sr. married Mary Cinther. Jonathan married Rosina Rapp, a sister of Caroline Rapp, who married John. Hartman married Mary Emrick, a sister of Adam Emrick. Jonathan and Hartman went to Illinois and settled near Attimont, near Effingham in Effingham Co.

Descendants of Casper Neireiter:

George Neireiter married Sadie Ervin of Effingham, Illinois, and left no children.

Daniel Neireiter married Mary Emrick Hake and to them were born:

William Neireiter, Castle Rock, Oregon.

Marion McIlville Neireiter, Hoagland, Ind.

Martin Neireiter, McKinnie Ave., Ft. Wayne, Ind.

Raymond Neireiter, 2302 S. Lafayette St., Ft. Wayne, Ind.

Henry Neireiter was born August 15, 1852, and died October 3, 1914.

Married Anna M. Work October 5, 1879, to whom were born Estella Elizabeth Neireiter and Claud Cleveland Neireiter, who died December 31, 1927.

Mary Neireiter married John E. Gresley to whom were born Lulu E. Castle, 2009 Race St., Denver, Colorado; and Nathan Casper Gresley, Hoagland, Ind.

Hattie Neireiter married Conrad Fry, Hoagland, Ind.

Solomon Neireiter married Nora Jobs, to whom were born Henry Otto Neireiter, Decatur, Ind.

Irene Mary Neireiter, 2502 Weisser Park Ave., Ft. Wayne, Ind.

Hannah died at 4 years of age.

Boot Soup

George Solomon Neireiter told his son of the privations incurred by himself when with Napoleon to Moscow. Food was so scarce that he and other soldiers cut the tops off their boots and boiled them in water and drank the broth from them. On another occasion they were in a forest hut when a mouse ran across the floor. There was a scramble to get it. One soldier caught it and ate it raw. All the dogs were killed and eaten; the soldiers begged for more dog food.

Peach Tree

In July, 1805 Napoleon took an expedition into Spain. There were days of weary marching, long lines of footsore soldier boys. The soldiers had been told not to forage, that privilege being given to officers. But toward evening on one hot, dusty day, the boys' great grandfather, aged 76 years, saw a peach tree just over the fence laden with yellow ripe peaches. Nimbly he hopped over the stone fence, gave the tree a shake to get just a few. And what to his surprise, every peach on the tree fell to the ground.

Mouse Castle

The farm on which George Solomon Neireiter was born in Germany near the famous "Mouse Tower" on the Rhine. This place is still a show place on the

Tourists' trip up and down the Rhine River, and the Historical Mouse Tower, famous in legend and story is still standing in 1928. Mrs. Fred Stolte of 924 Columbia Ave. saw it during the past summer.

The legend follows: A titled land owner had gathered into his large barns all the grain of the surrounding country. The country people living round about were starving and begging for food. He wouldn't give them any, but one day he told them to come and he would help them. When they came he invited them into one barn and after all were in, he had the doors closed and barred. Then he set fire to the barn and burned the poor people. When they were screaming and moaning, he laughed and said to his rich friends, "Listen to my mice".

What to his surprise that night his house was over-run with mice and they seemed to want to bother him. This grew worse and worse as time went on. There were countless thousands of them. So in order to escape them, he had built on the Rhine River a stone tower with living quarters. When it was completed he went there to live, great care and watchfulness being given everything to see that no mice were carried into the tower. But his security was of short duration; that night countless mice besieged the castle and ate the baron up.

George Solomon Neireiter, A Hessian.

While George Solomon Neireiter was a soldier of the first class, he was too young to be a soldier at the time of the Revolutionary war. Many of his townspeople the soldiers hired by the British to fight the Americans and upon their return to the Old Country reported fine treatment which they received from George Washington, and of the poor treatment at the hands of the British. These friends were unanimous in their praise of Washington and his men and of the kindness in their treatment and the sharing of whatever food the continental

army had and also their bitter condemnation of the lying tactics of the British who hired them to fight the colonists, who the British told them were a low inferior people. It was from these things that he decided to come to America to avoid further war.

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